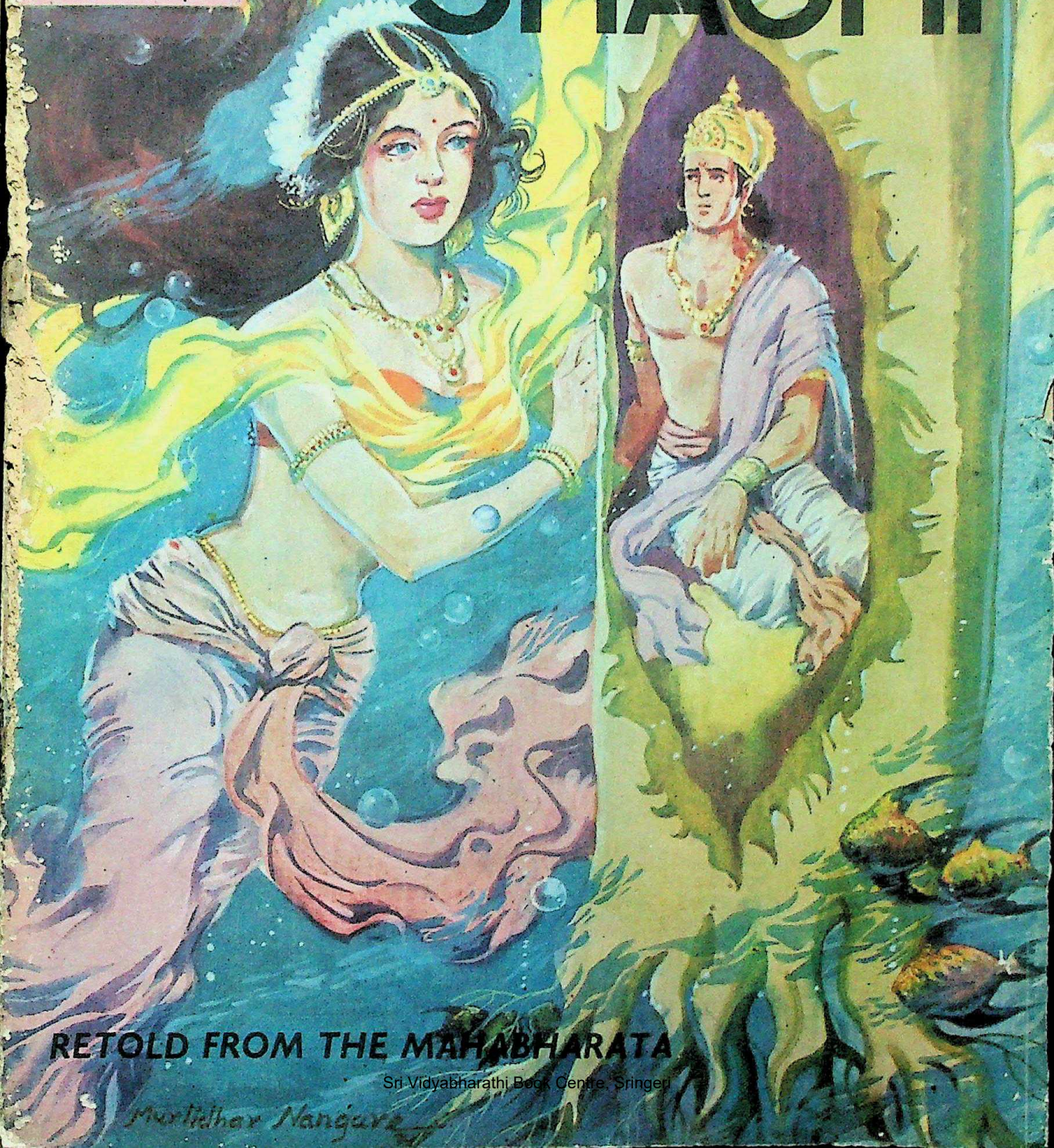




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INDRA AND SHACHI

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In the following pages we trace the fluctuating fortunes of Indra in his battle with the evil forces seeking to oust him. We see how the devotion of his wife brings him unscathed through his tribulations. Shachi is a figure all women admire and strive to emulate. This story is adapted from the Mahabharata. It is narrated to Yudhishtira before the Mahabharata war to console him for his sufferings.



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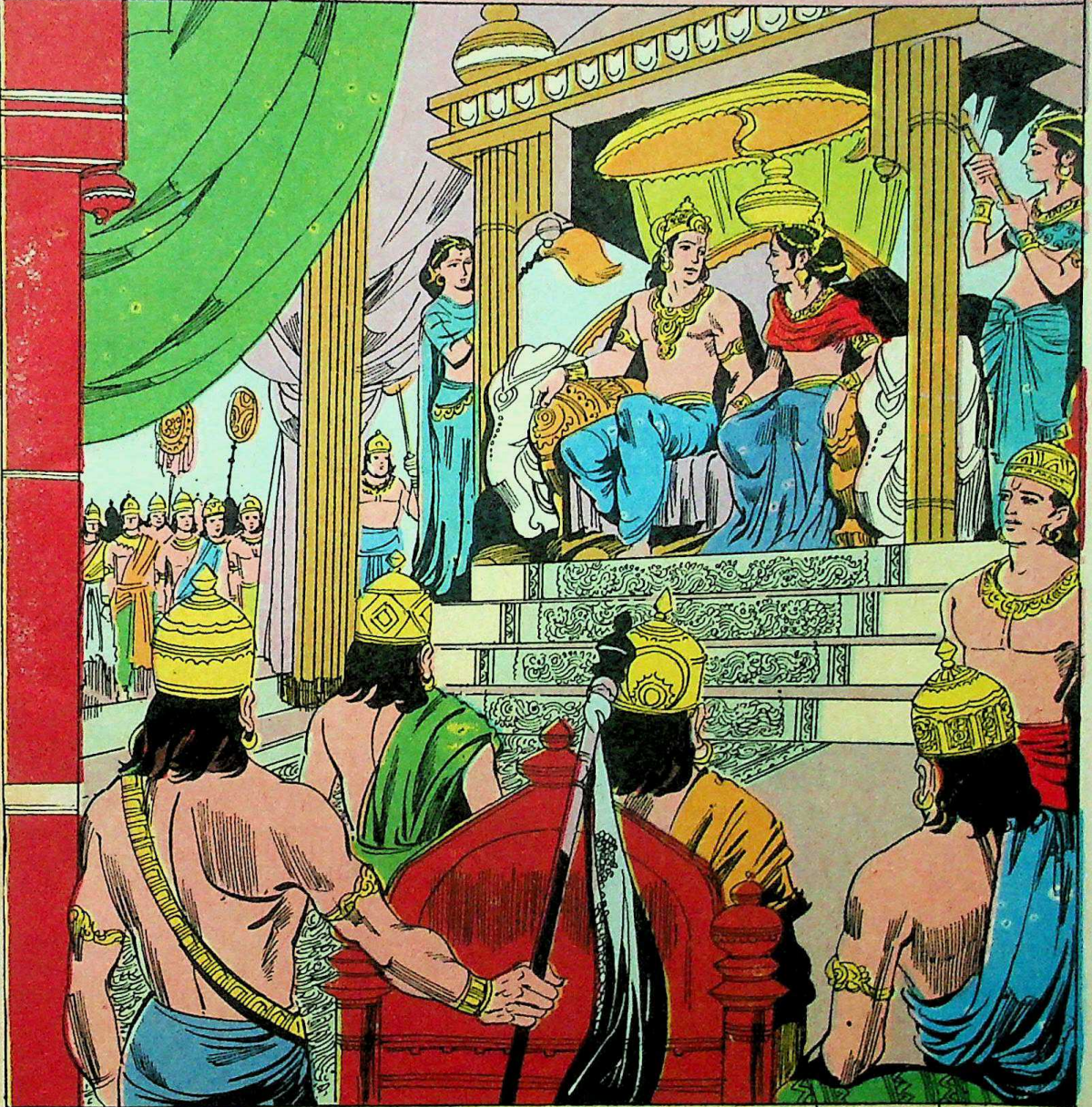
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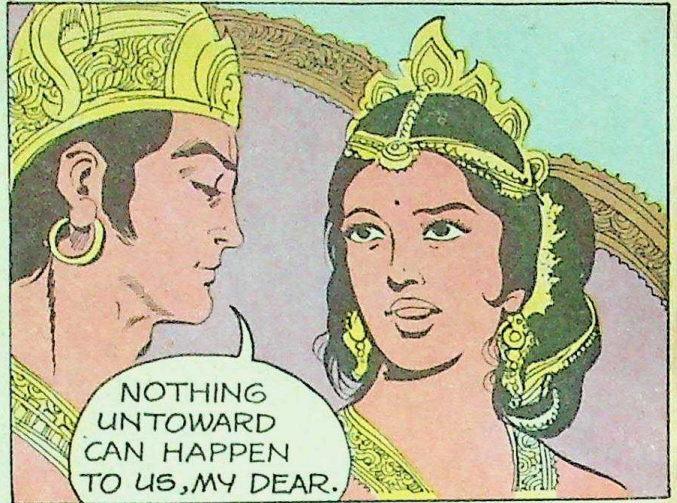
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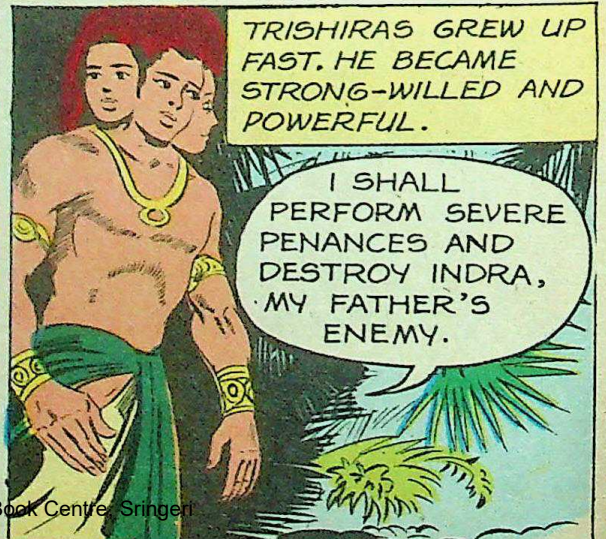
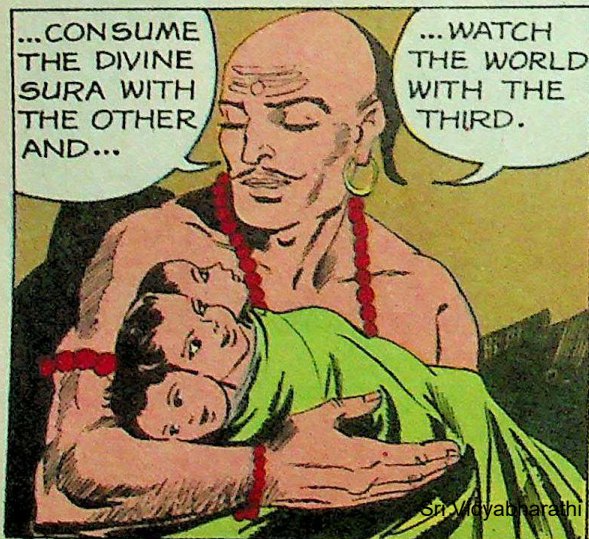
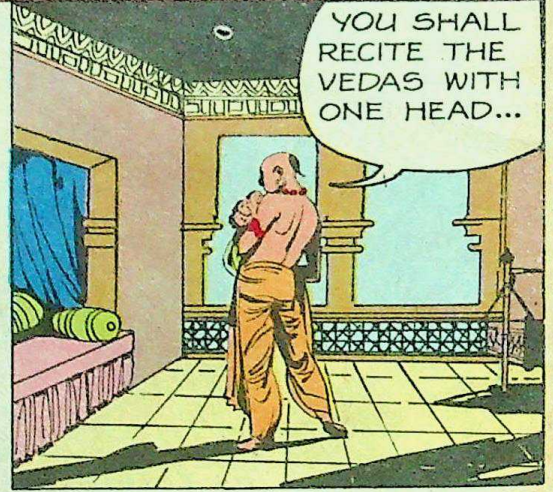
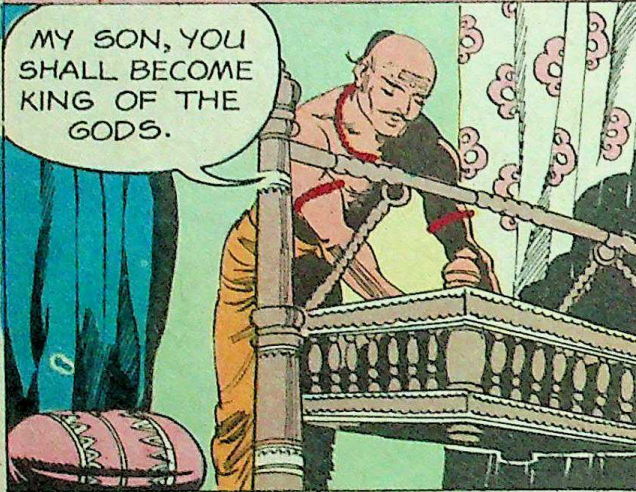
INDRA AND SHACHI



INDRA WAS THE KING OF THE DEVAS. HE LIVED WITH HIS QUEEN, SHACHI IN HIS CELESTIAL CITY, AMARAVATI.



BUT THERE WAS CAUSE FOR THEM TO FEAR. AT THAT VERY MOMENT A SON WAS BORN TO TVASHTA, INDRA'S ENEMY.

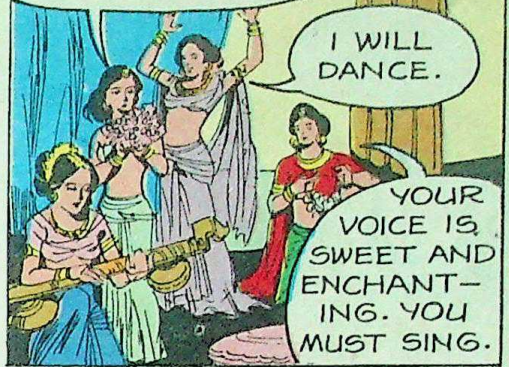


INDRA HEARD OF TRISHIRAS AND OF HIS INTENSE PENANCE TO DESTROY HIM. HE SENT FOR THE APSARAS, THE CELESTIAL MAIDENS...

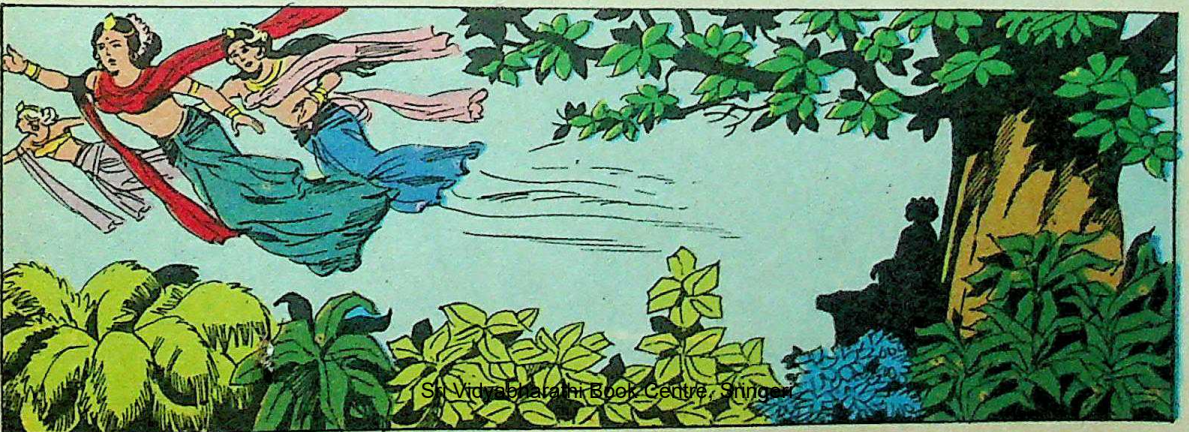


THE APSARAS PREPARED THEMSELVES.

WE WILL TEMPT HIM WITH THESE FRUITS AND FLOWERS.



THEIR CHARMS WERE HEAVENLY. BUT TRISHIRAS WAS UNMOVED.



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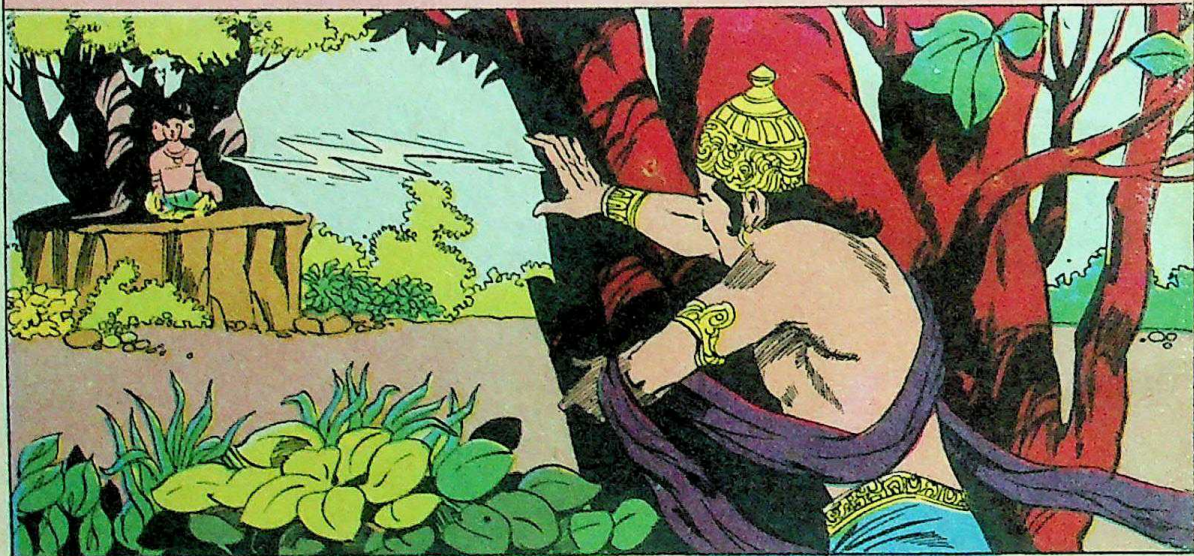
THE APSARAS RETURNED TO
INDRA.



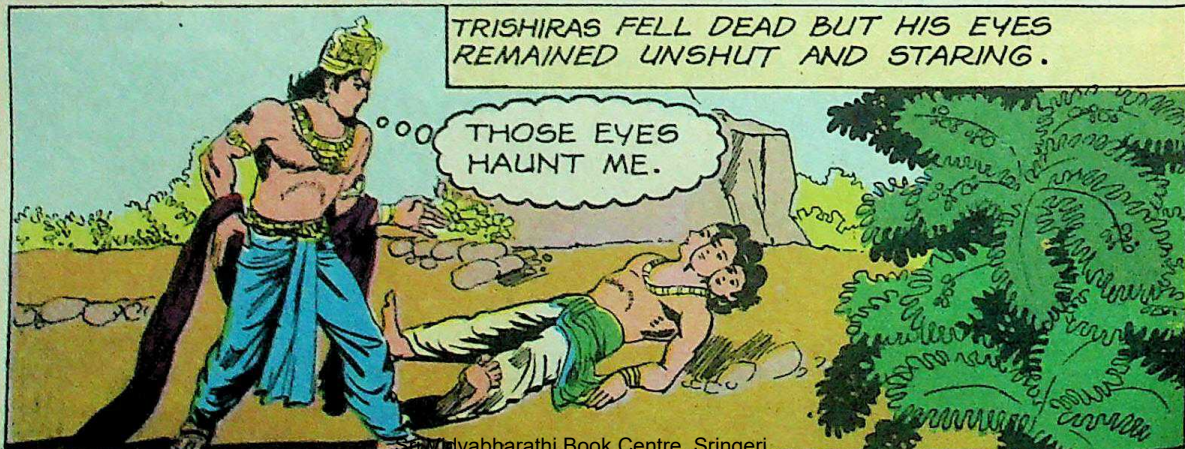
SHACHI WAS WORRIED.

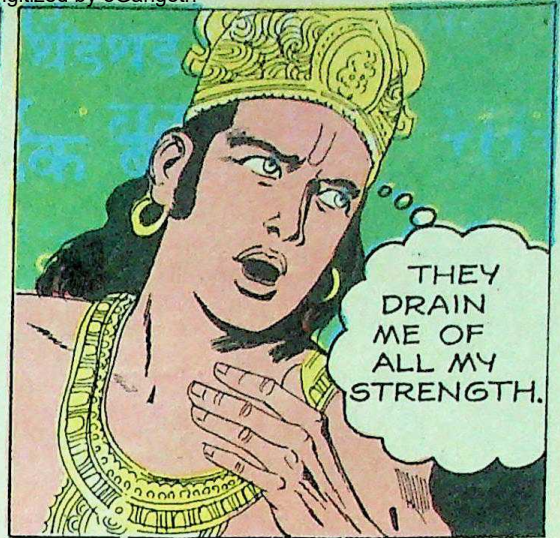
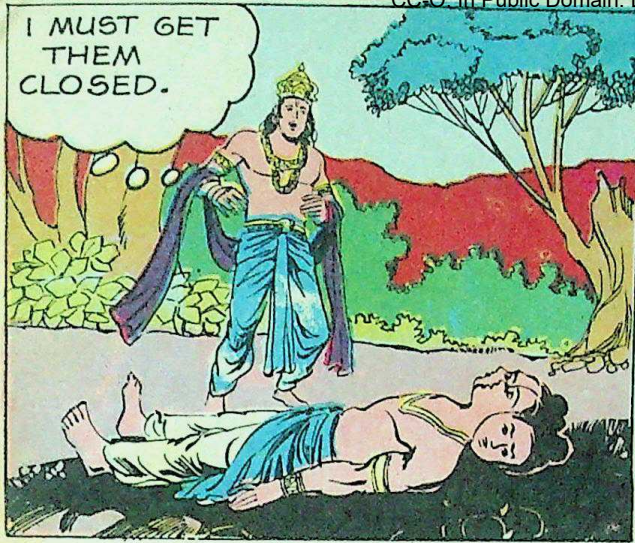


INDRA THREW HIS THUNDERBOLT AT TRISHIRAS WHILE HE WAS
PRAYING.

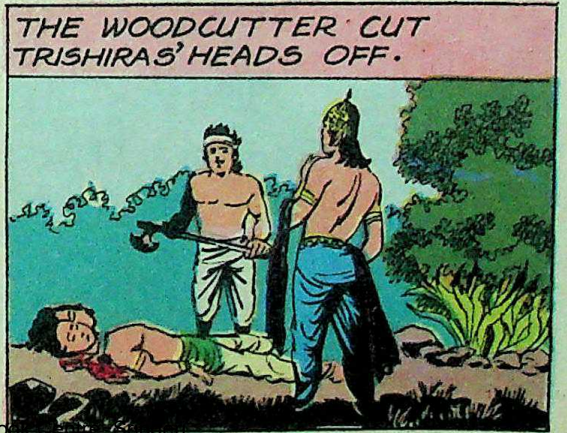
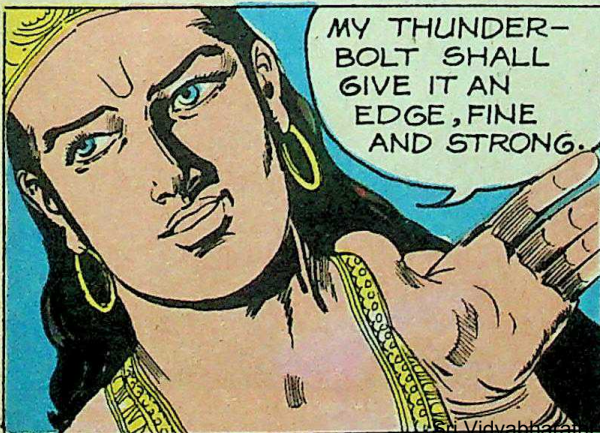
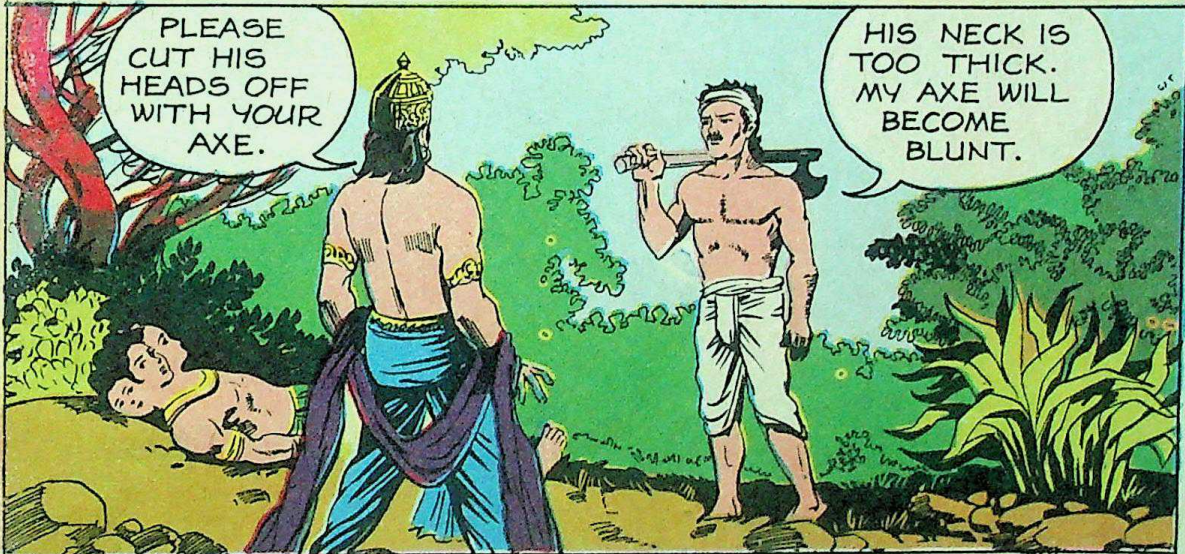


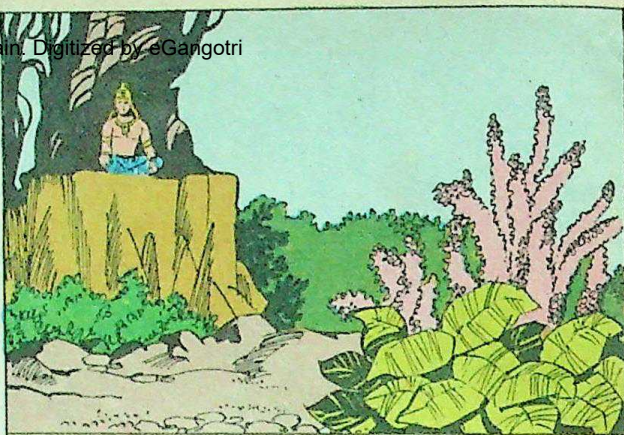
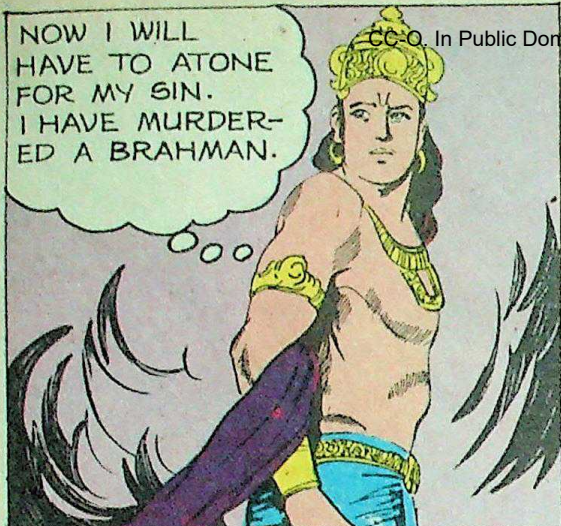
TRISHIRAS FELL DEAD BUT HIS EYES
REMAINED UNSHUT AND STARING.





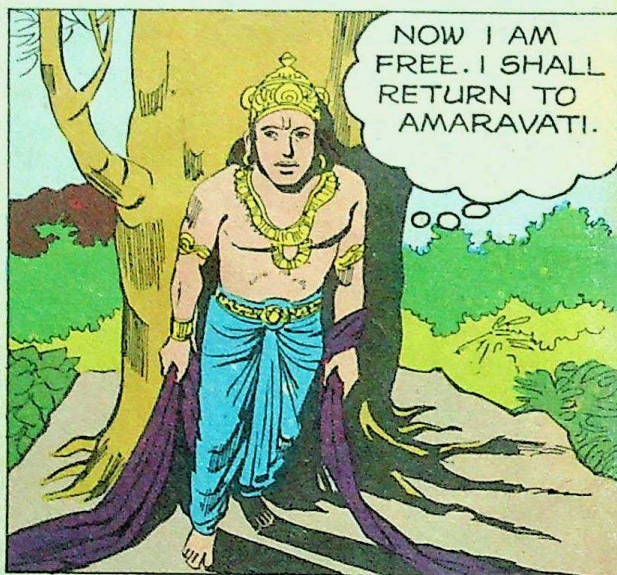
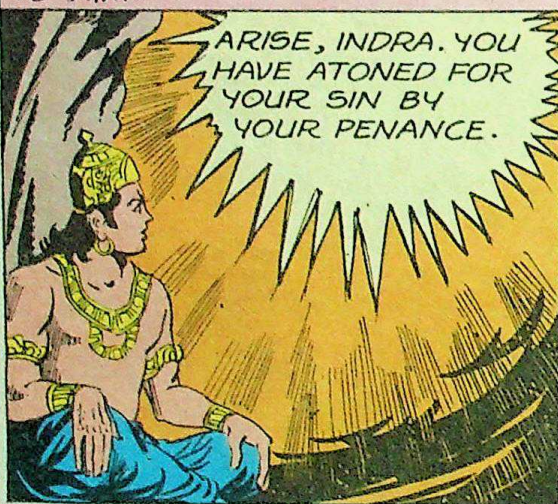
AT THAT MOMENT A WOODCUTTER HAPPENED TO PASS BY.





INDRA DID PENANCE FOR A LONG TIME.

FINALLY, A DIVINE VOICE SPOKE TO HIM.



MEANWHILE TVASHTA HEARD OF TRISHIRAS' DEATH. HE WAS DEEPLY GRIEVED AND VERY ANGRY.

I SHALL AVENGE MY SON'S DEATH FROM THE POWER OF MY PRAYERS...

...SHALL RISE AN ASURA.

TVASHTA PERFORMED A SACRIFICE AND CREATED AN ASURA.

YOU ARE VRITRA. GO FORTH AND KILL INDRA.

WHEN INDRA HEARD OF VRITRA, HE PREPARED TO MEET THE CHALLENGE.

VRITRA HAS COME TO AVENGE TRISHIRAS.

I KNEW NO GOOD WOULD COME OF KILLING TRISHIRAS.

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THERE WAS A TERRIBLE BATTLE IN WHICH VRITRA CAUGHT
INDRA BETWEEN HIS TEETH.



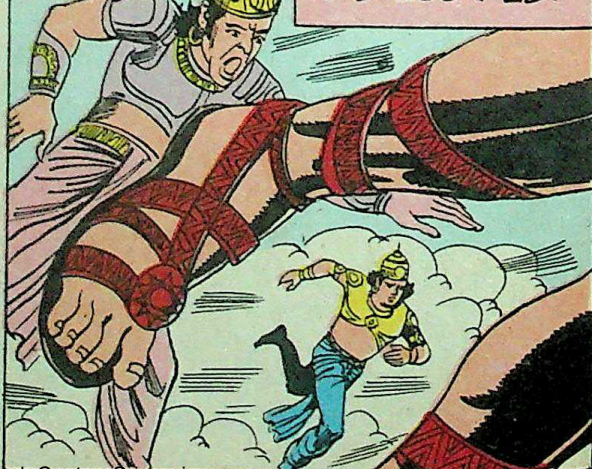
THE JIRIMBHAKA ASTRA FOUND ITS MARK.



VRITRA YAWNED...



INDRA MADE HIMSELF TINY
AND ESCAPED.

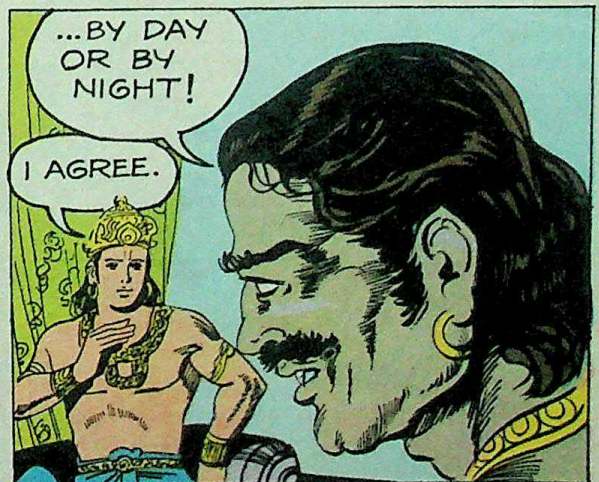
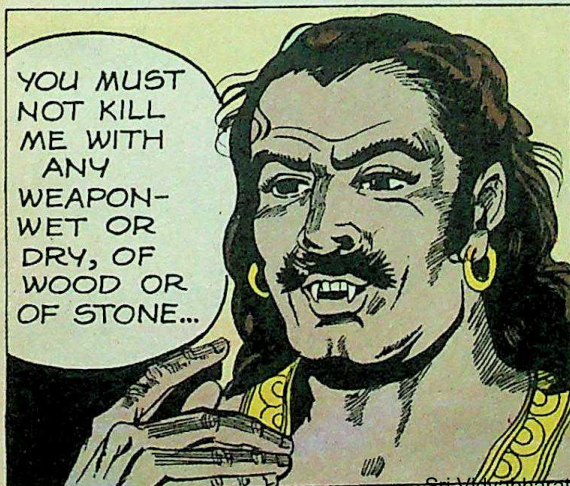


* AN ARROW WHICH MAKES A
MAN YAWN.

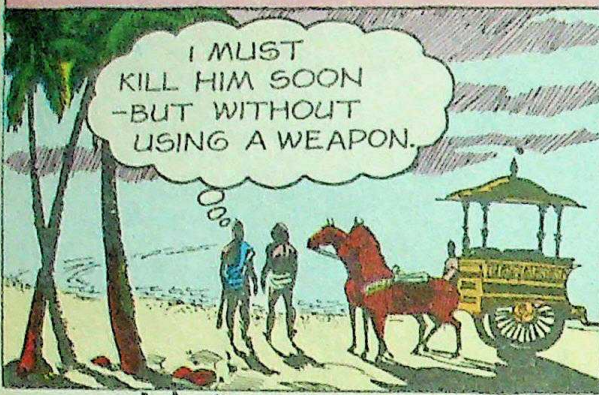
HE AND HIS SUBJECTS WENT TO VISHNU FOR ADVICE.



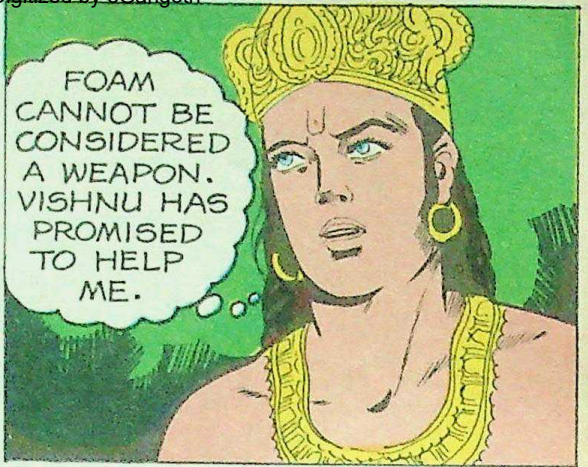
INDRA MADE PEACE WITH VRITRA. BUT VRITRA WAS WARY.



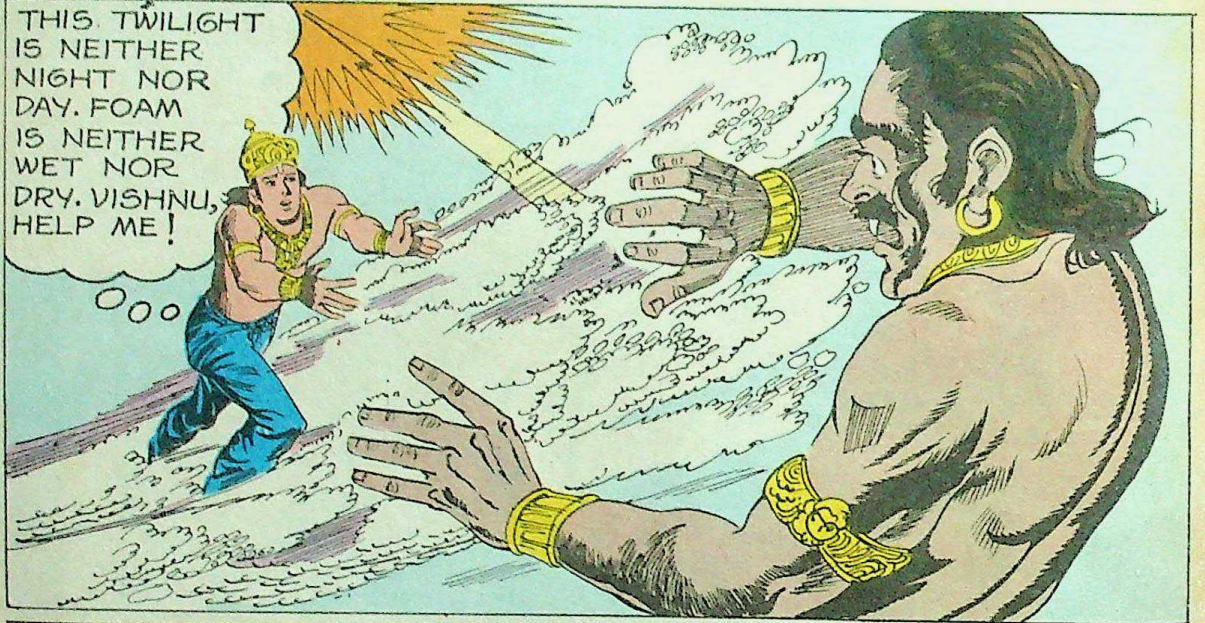
ONE EVENING THEY WERE ON THE SEA-SHORE.



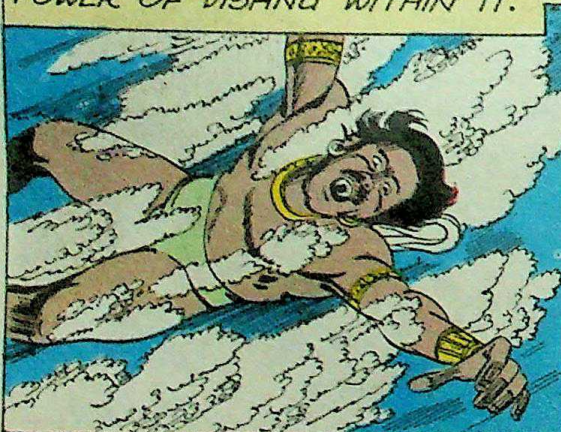
FOAM CANNOT BE CONSIDERED A WEAPON. VISHNU HAS PROMISED TO HELP ME.



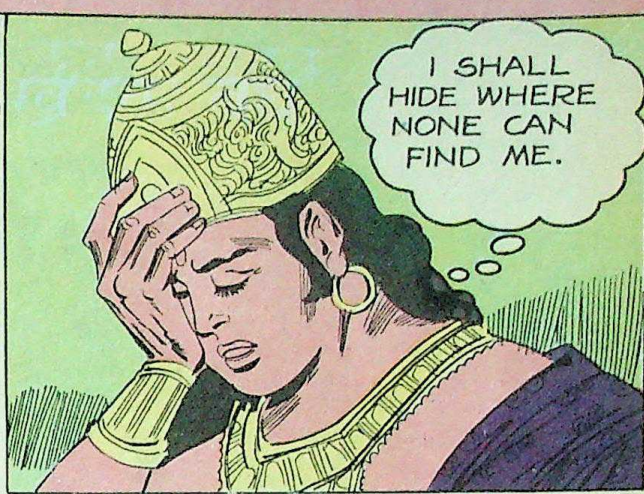
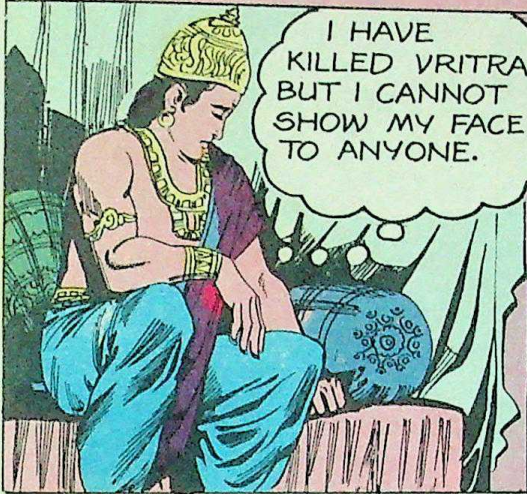
THIS TWILIGHT IS NEITHER NIGHT NOR DAY. FOAM IS NEITHER WET NOR DRY. VISHNU, HELP ME!



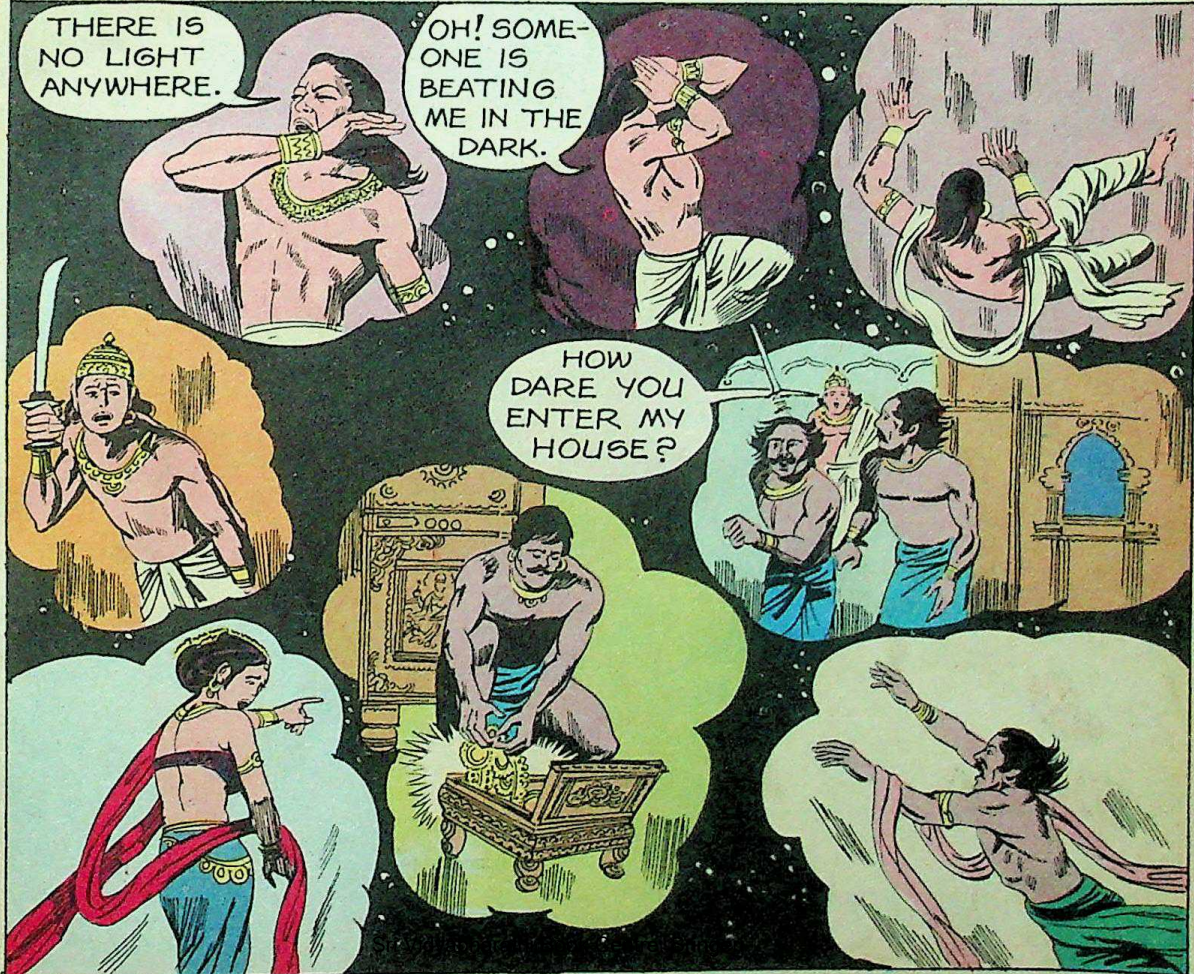
VISHNU ENTERED THE FOAM AND WHEN INDRA THREW IT AT VRITRA, HE WAS KILLED IMMEDIATELY BY THE POWER OF VISHNU WITHIN IT.



BUT AS INDRA HAD BETRAYED VRITRA HE WAS ASHAMED TO FACE THE WORLD.



INDRA RAN AWAY. ALL WAS DARKNESS AND CHAOS, ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN.



THE DEVAS MET IN A COUNCIL.

WITHOUT
A KING THE
HEAVENS
ARE IN
CHAOS.

WE CANNOT
ALLOW THIS
ANARCHY
TO GO ON.

INDRA
HAS
DESERTED
US.

WE
MUST
FIND
ANOTHER
KING.

KING NAHUSHA
IS A GOOD AND
PIOUS MAN.
SHALL WE
SELECT
HIM?

YES! YES!

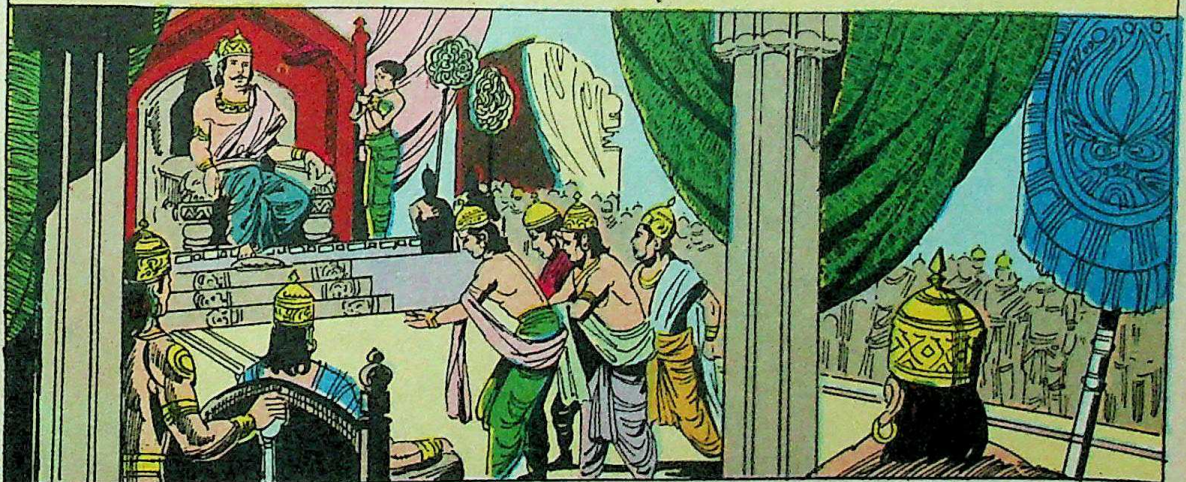
LET US GO TO
EARTH AND
INVITE HIM TO
BE OUR
KING.

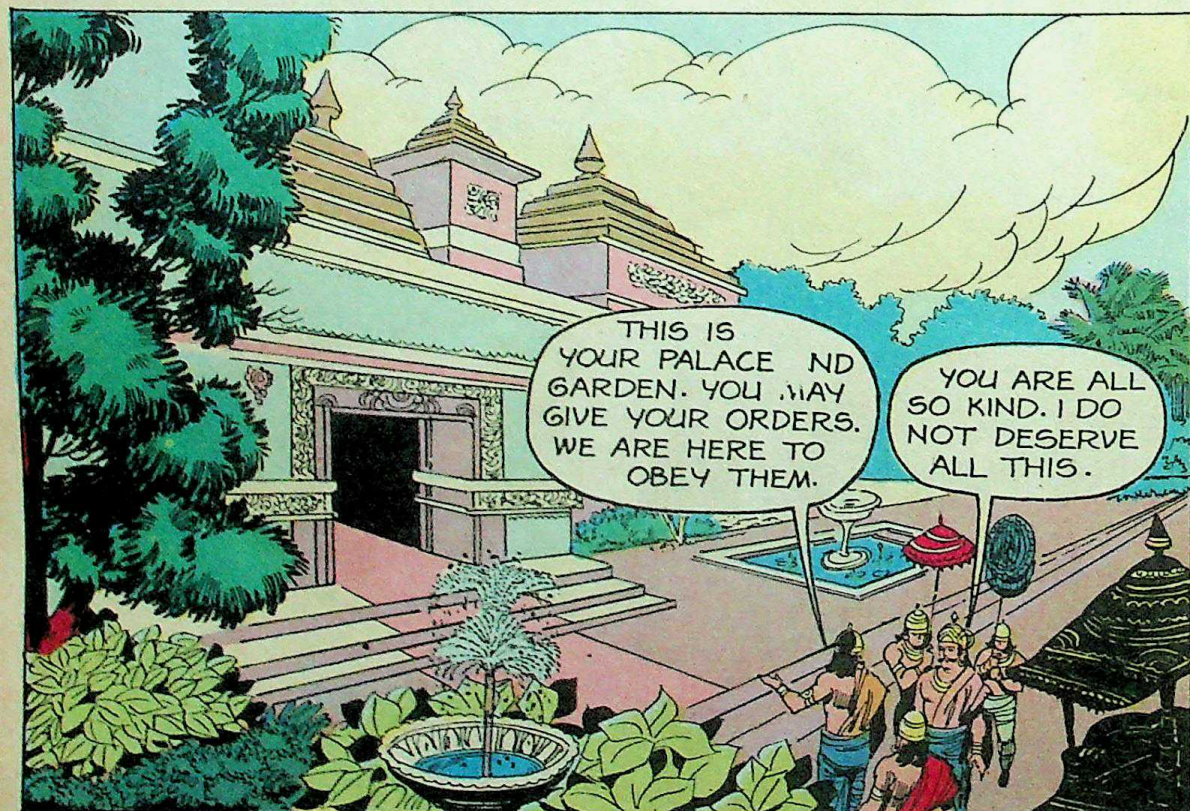
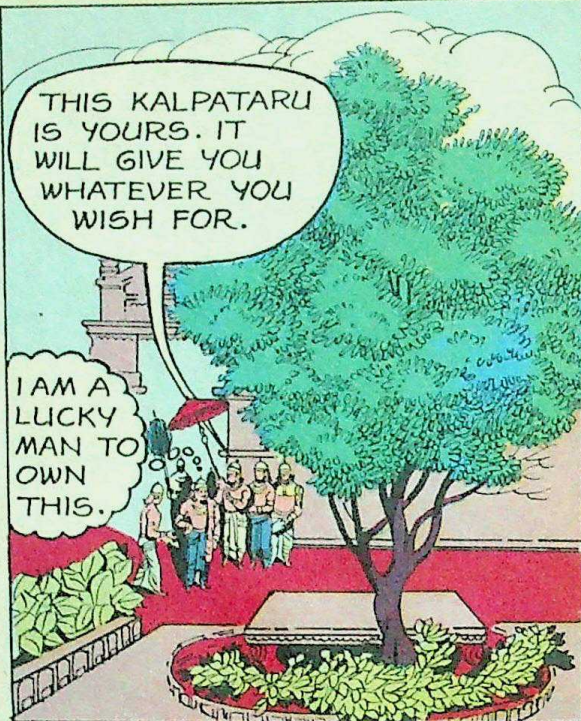
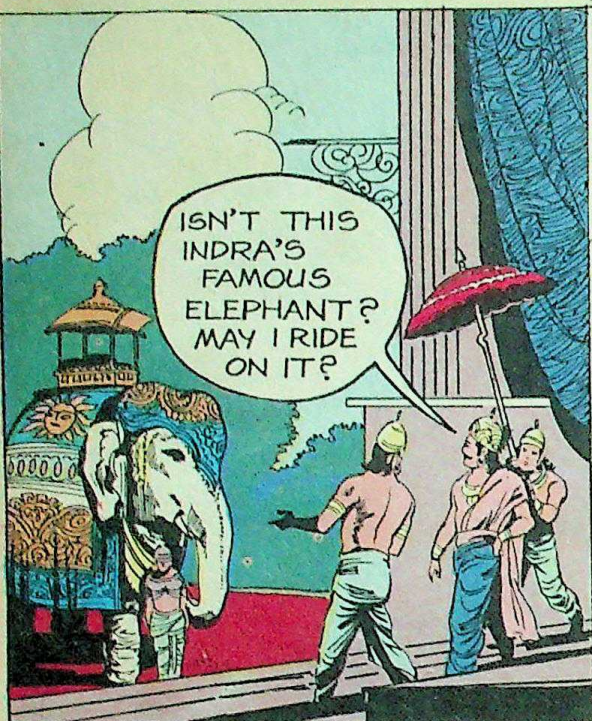
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THE DEVAS WENT TO KING NAHUSHA'S COURT.

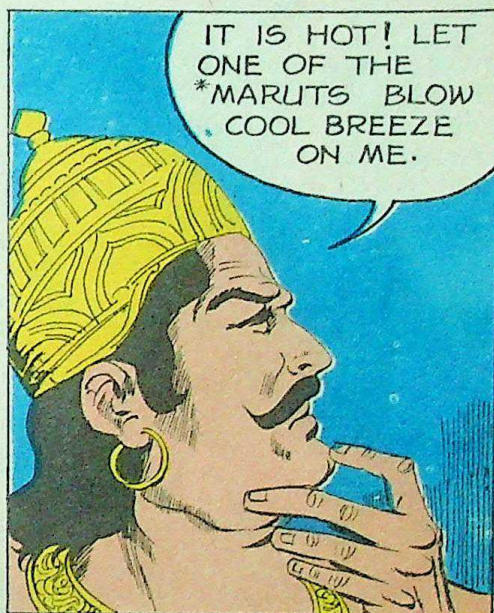
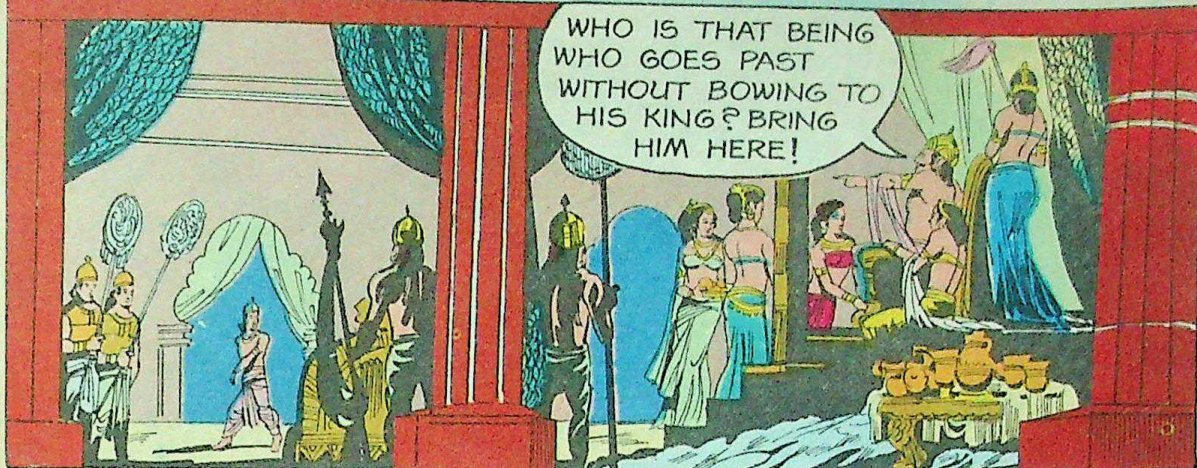


THE DEVAS MADE NAHUSHA THEIR KING.





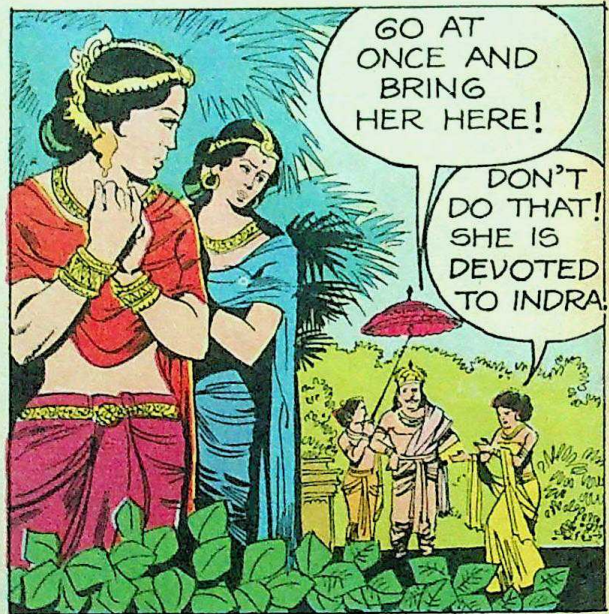
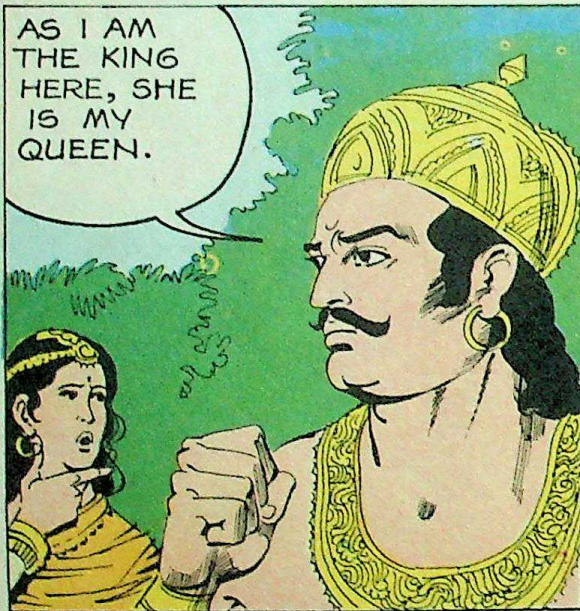
BUT ALAS! NAHUSHA ^{CC-0 Public Domain, Digitized by eGangotri} BECAME CONCEITED AND ARROGANT.



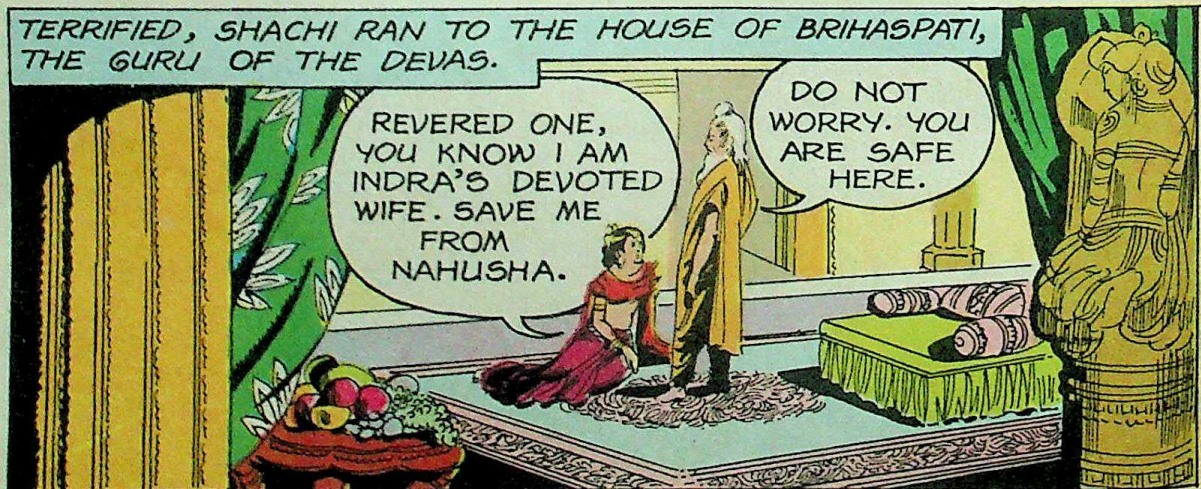
THE DEVAS WERE VERY UNHAPPY.



* THE GODS OF WIND.



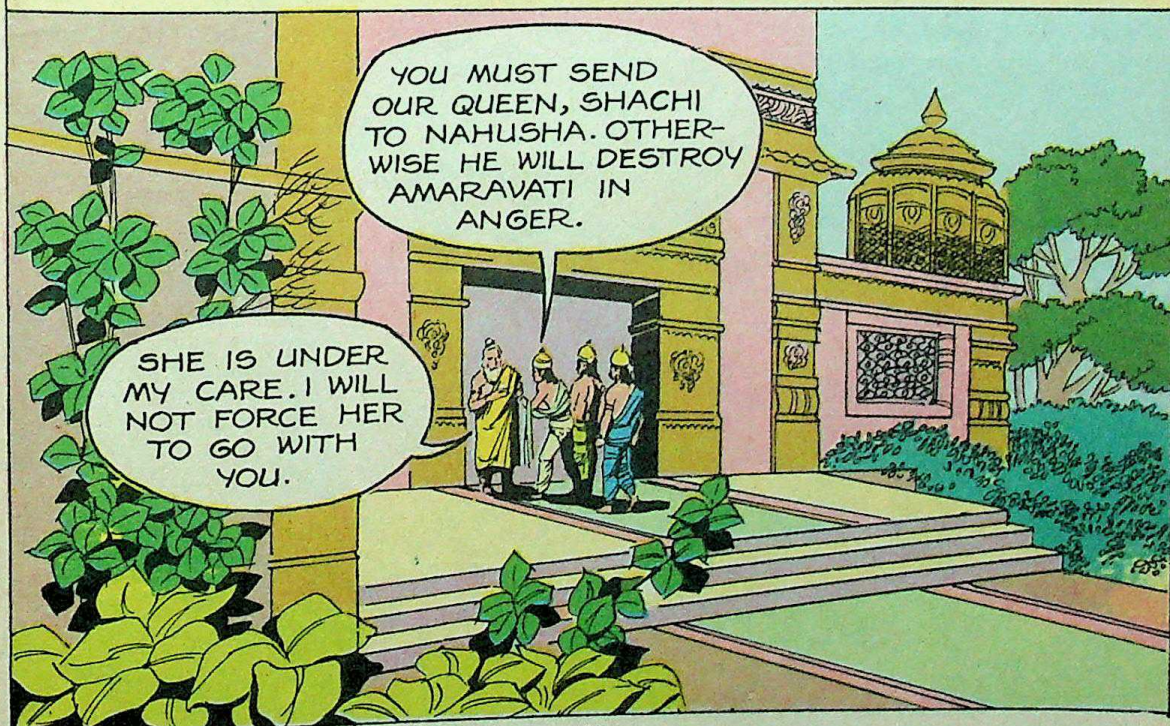
TERRIFIED, SHACHI RAN TO THE HOUSE OF BRIHASPATI, THE GURU OF THE DEVAS.

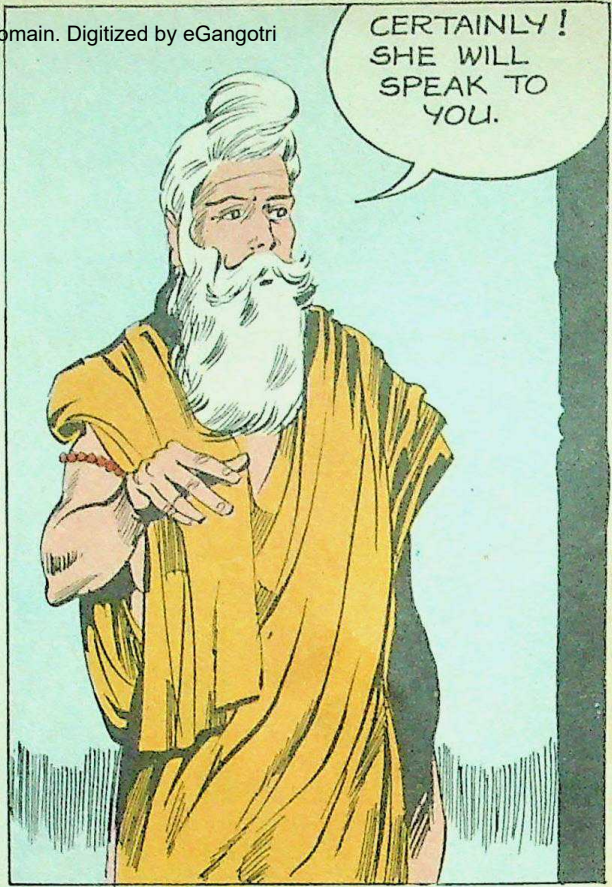
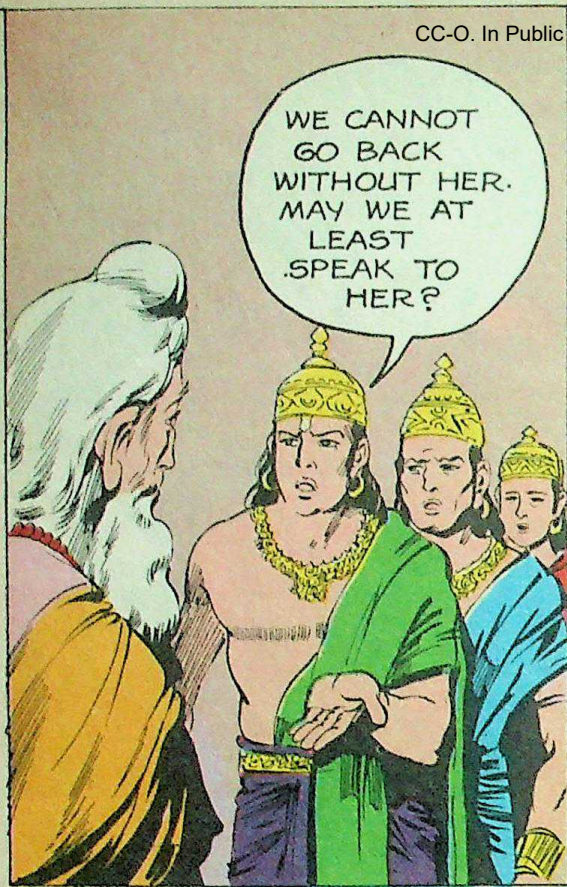


NAHUSHA WAS VERY ANGRY WHEN HE HEARD THAT SHACHI WAS IN BRIHASPATI'S HOUSE.

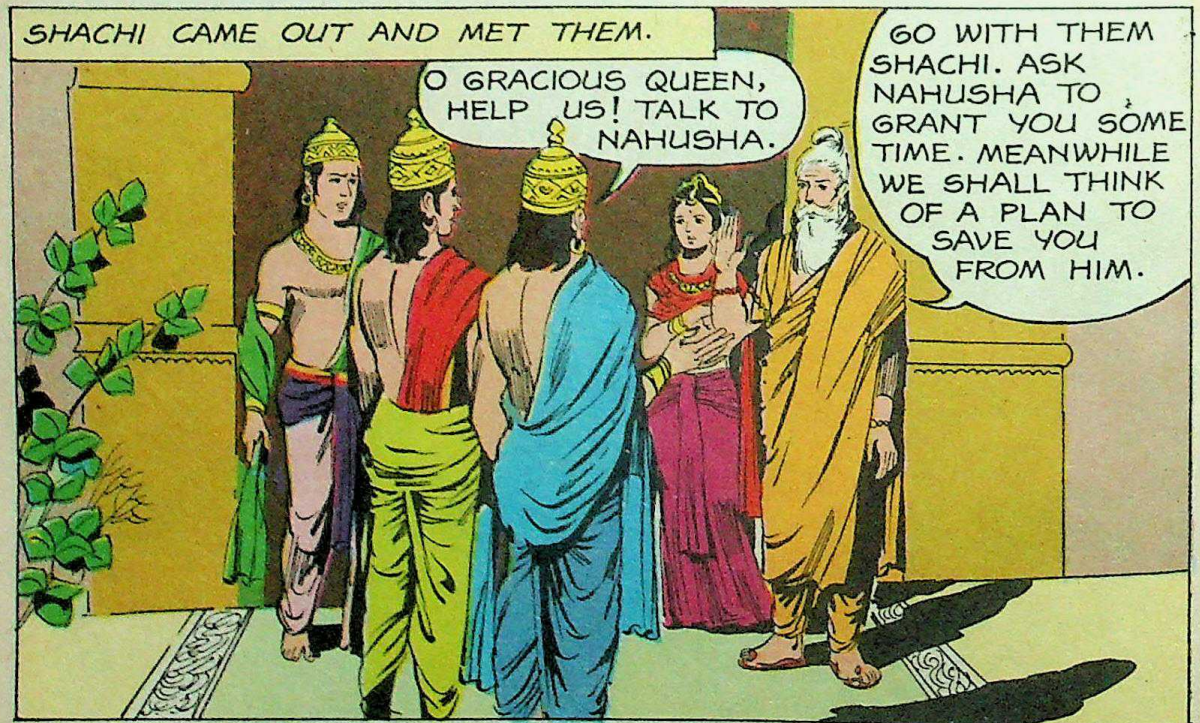


THE DEVAS TREMBLED BEFORE NAHUSHA'S FURY. THEY RAN TO BRIHASPATI'S HOUSE.





SHACHI CAME OUT AND MET THEM.



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SO, PROMPTED BY BRIHASPATI, THE DEVAS WENT TO NAHUSHA.

FIRST LET US SEARCH FOR MY LORD. IF HE CANNOT BE FOUND I SHALL BECOME YOUR QUEEN.

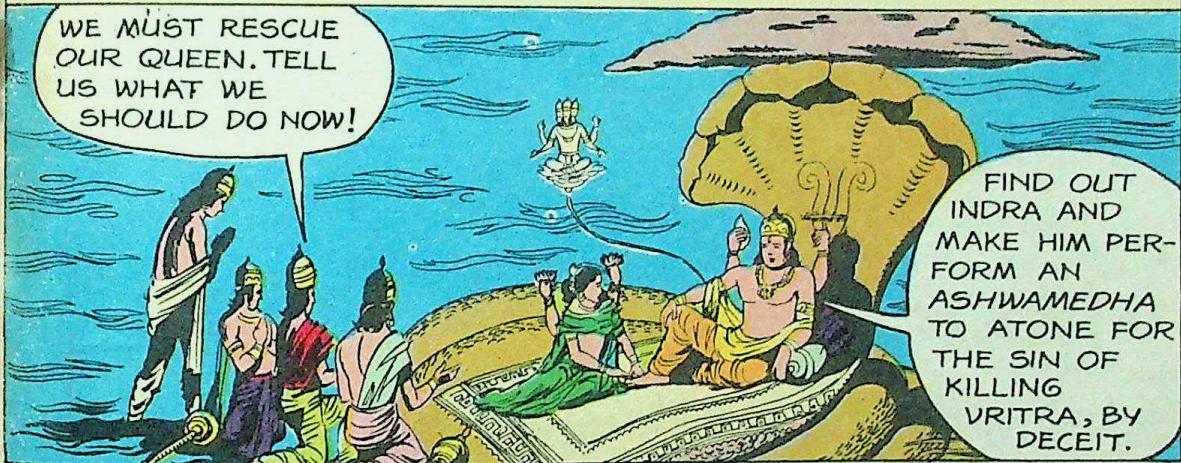
THAT IS REASONABLE. I AGREE.



THE DEVAS THEN WENT TO VISHNU FOR ADVICE.

WE MUST RESCUE OUR QUEEN. TELL US WHAT WE SHOULD DO NOW!

FIND OUT INDRA AND MAKE HIM PERFORM AN ASHWAMEDHA TO ATONE FOR THE SIN OF KILLING VRITRA, BY DECEIT.



AGNI, THE FIRE-GOD, LED THE SEARCH FOR INDRA.

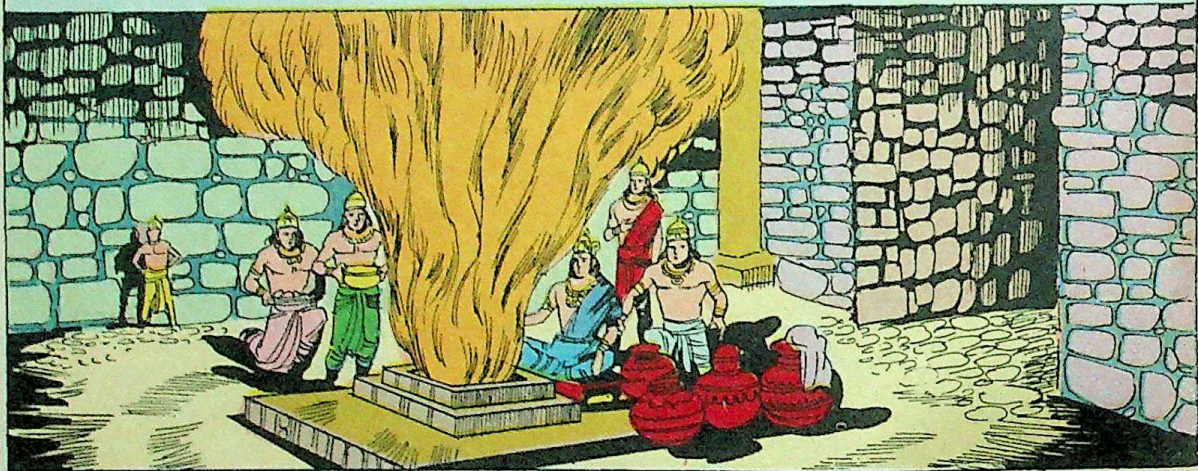
COME ON! WE WILL FIND HIM SOMEHOW.

YES, HE MUST BE FOUND.





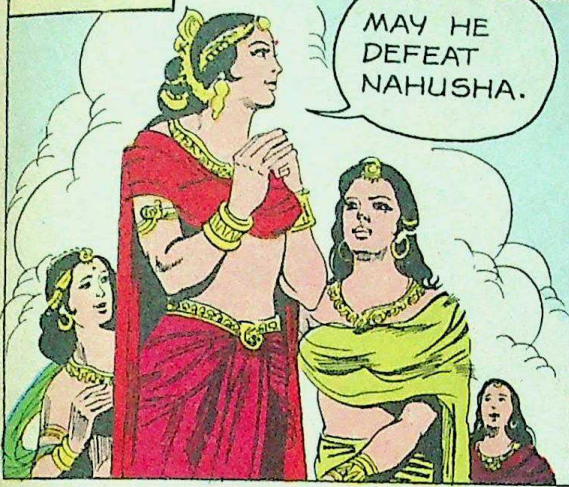
INDRA PERFORMED THE ASHWAMEDHA...



... AND THEN SET OUT TO CHALLENGE NAHUSHA.

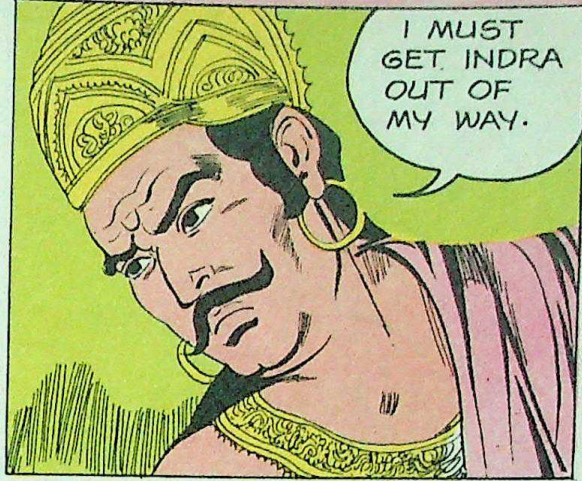


SHACHI HEARD THAT INDRA WAS COMING.



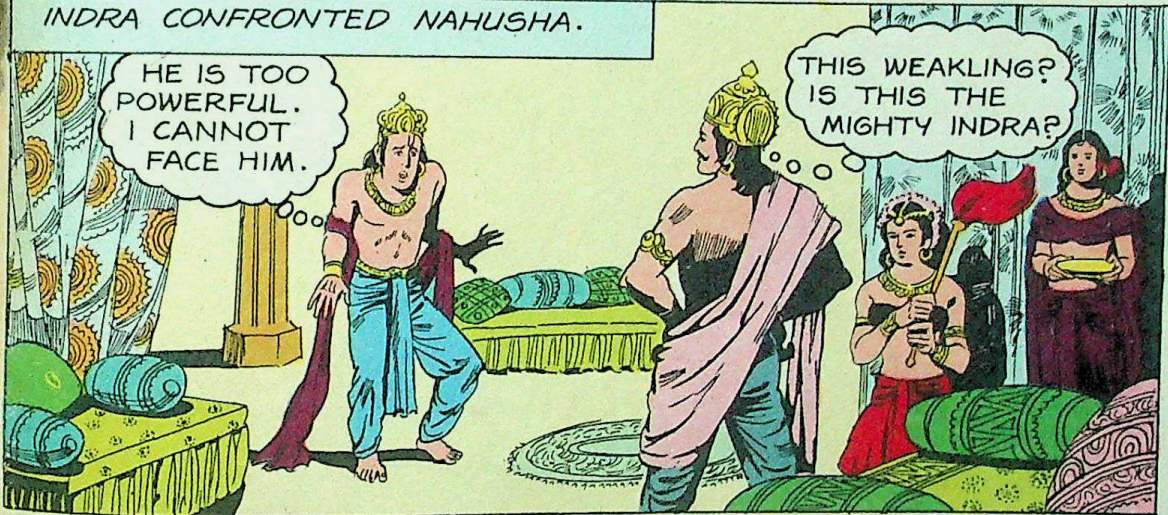
MAY HE DEFEAT NAHUSHA.

SO DID NAHUSHA.



I MUST GET INDRA OUT OF MY WAY.

INDRA CONFRONTED NAHUSHA.



HE IS TOO POWERFUL. I CANNOT FACE HIM.

THIS WEAKLING? IS THIS THE MIGHTY INDRA?

INDRA RAN AWAY.



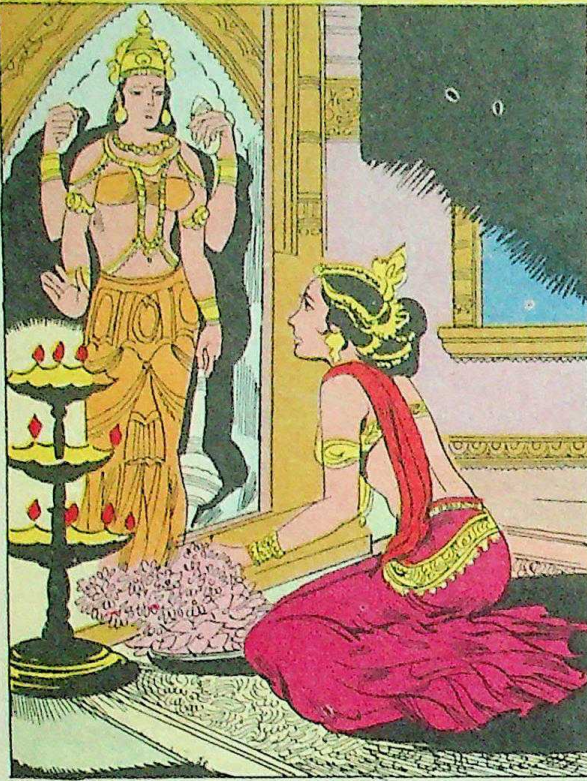
WHY DO I QUAKE IN FEAR?

SHACHI WEPT.



I WOULD GIVE MY LIFE TO HELP HIM.

SHACHI PRAYED TO UPASHRUTI, A GODDESS OF THE NIGHT.



UPASHRUTI APPEARED BEFORE SHACHI.



UPASHRUTI LED SHACHI INTO THE DARK NIGHT.



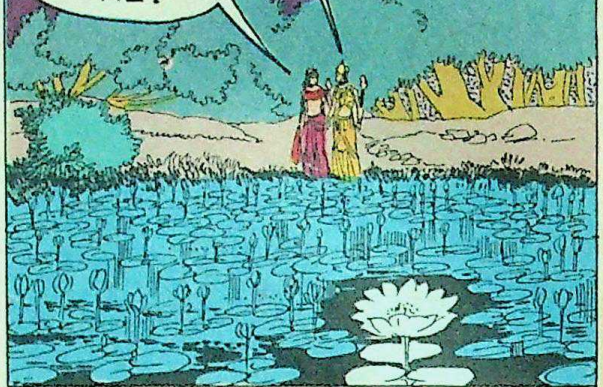
I AM TIRED.
LET ME
REST A
LITTLE.

NO!
WE ARE
ALMOST
THERE.
HURRY.



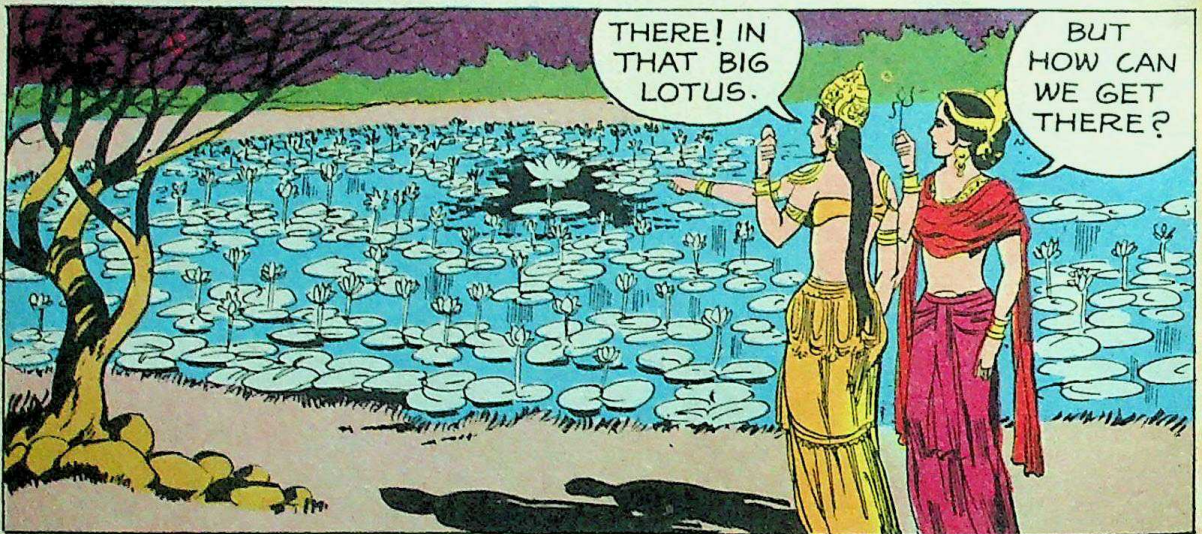
THIS IS OUR
DESTINATION.

WHERE IS
HE?



THERE! IN
THAT BIG
LOTUS.

BUT
HOW CAN
WE GET
THERE?



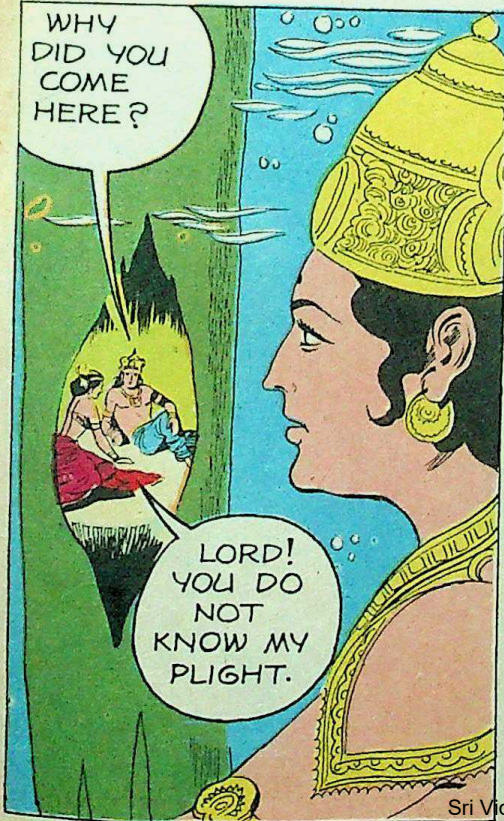
WE ARE INSIDE
THE LAKE. DON'T
BE
AFRAID.



NOW I WILL
SLIT THIS
LOTUS STEM!



LIPASHRUTI SLIT THE STEM. INSIDE COWERED A TINY INDRA.



AFTER SHACHI HAD EXPLAINED THE WHOLE SITUATION —

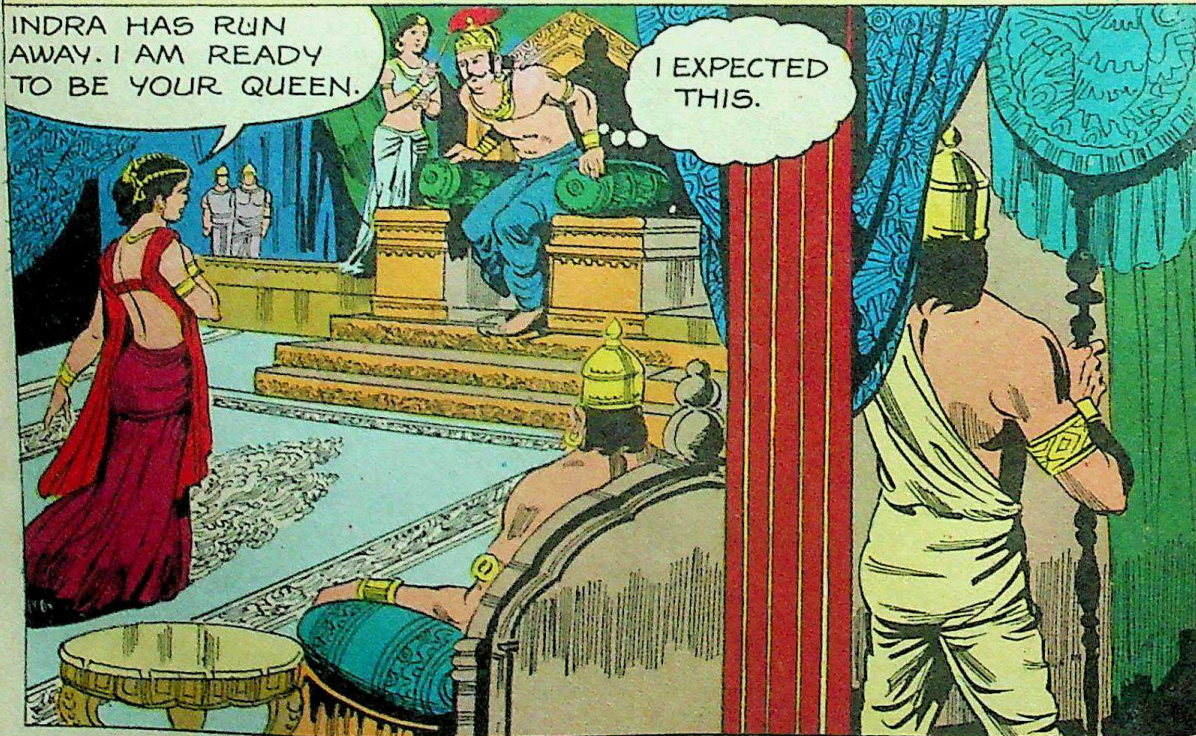




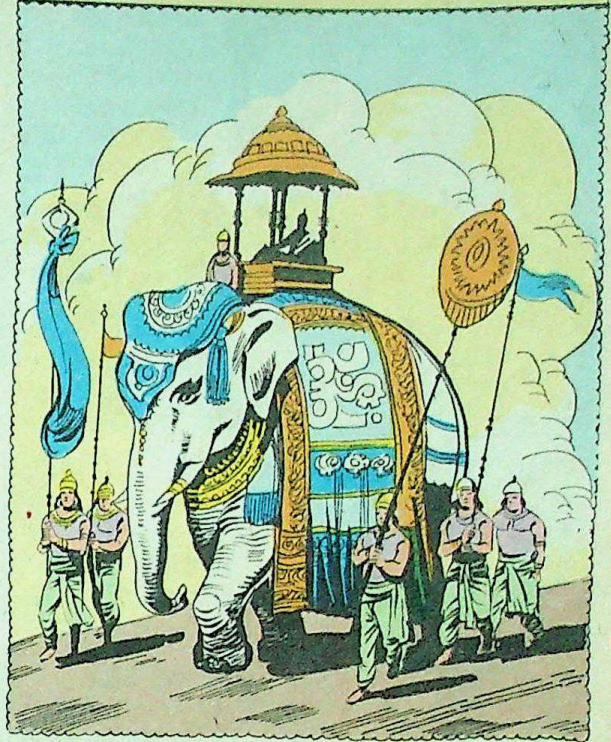
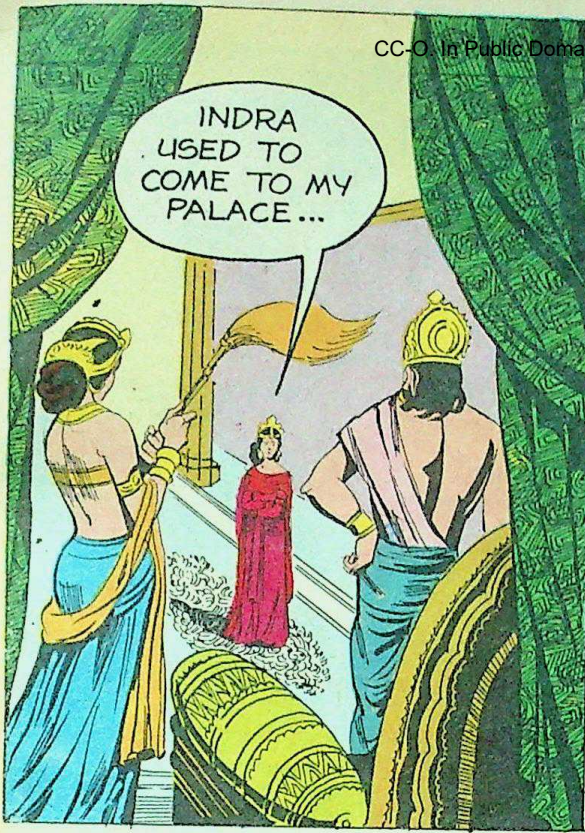
THE NEXT MORNING SHACHI WENT TO NAHUSHA.

INDRA HAS RUN AWAY. I AM READY TO BE YOUR QUEEN.

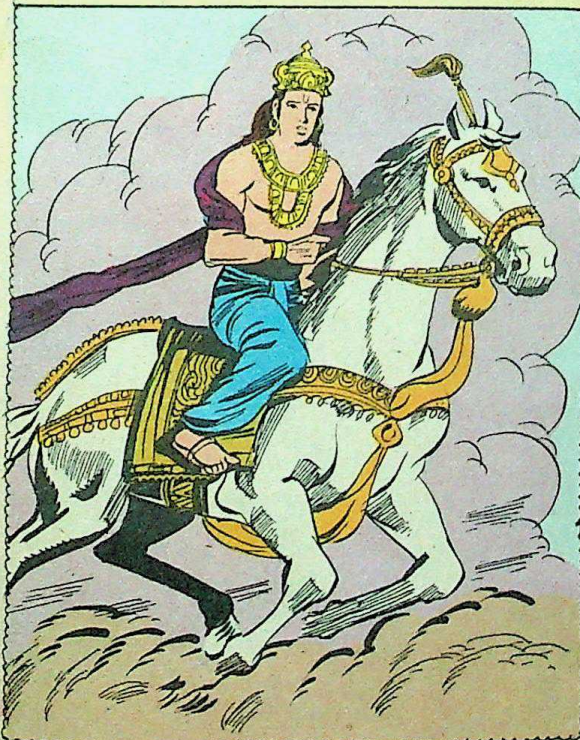
I EXPECTED THIS.



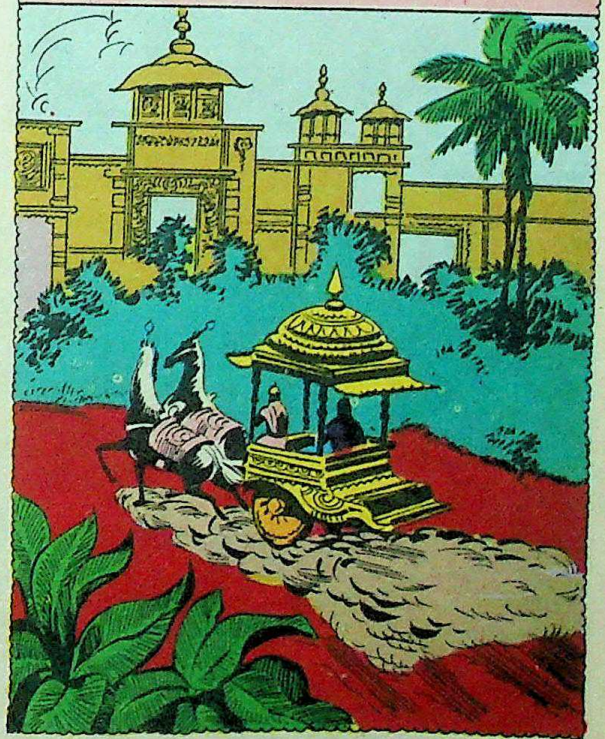
SOMETIMES ON HIS WHITE ELEPHANT..."

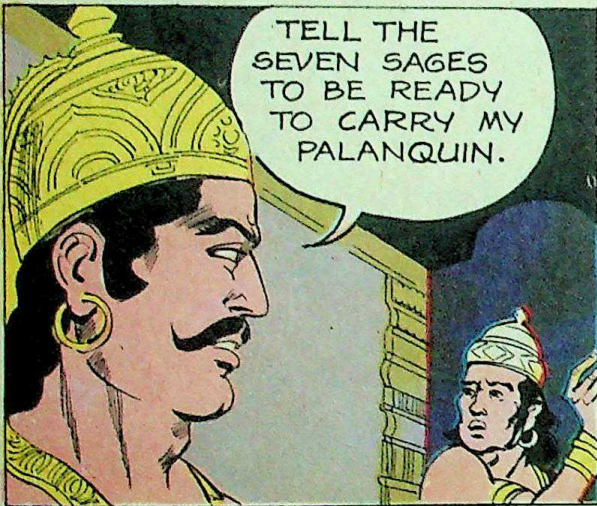


"... SOMETIMES ON A HORSE..."

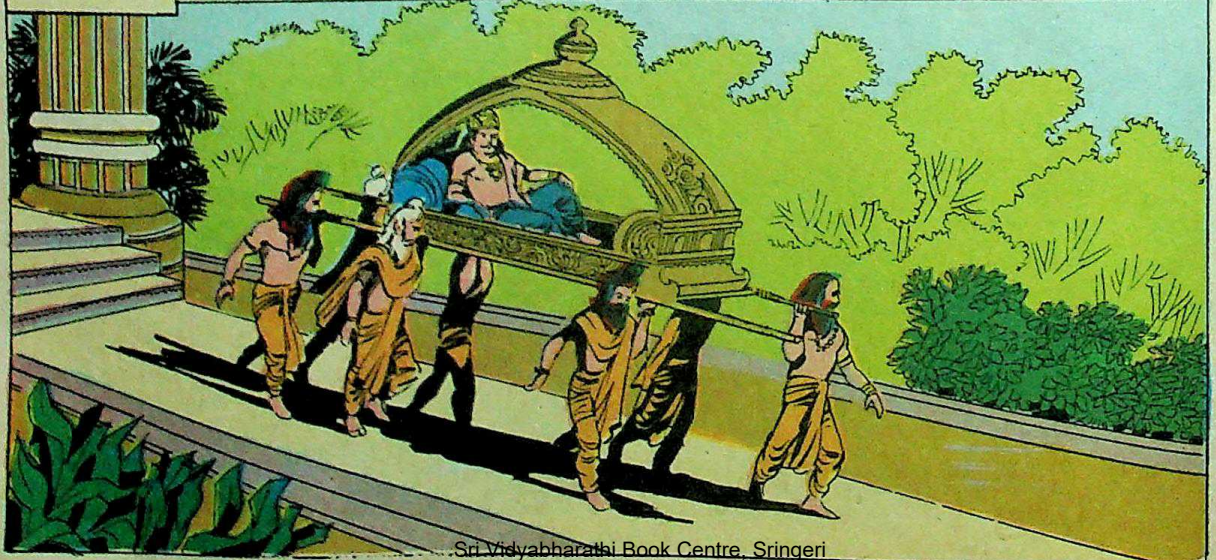


"... SOMETIMES IN HIS CHARIOT."

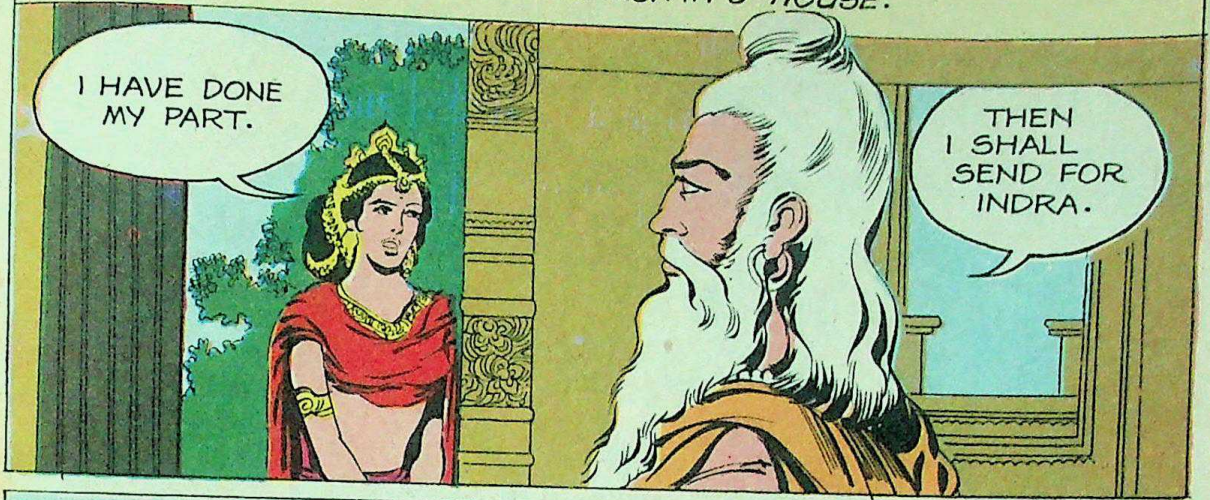




NAHUSHA SET OUT IN THE PALANQUIN BORNE BY THE SEVEN SAGES.



MEANWHILE SHACHI WENT TO BRIHASPATI'S HOUSE.



BRIHASPATI INVOKED AGNI IN A SACRIFICE.

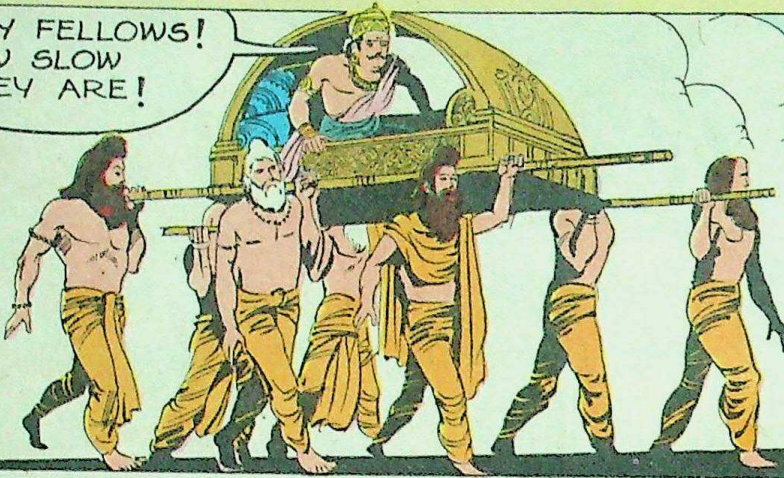


AGNI CALLED THE DEVAS.

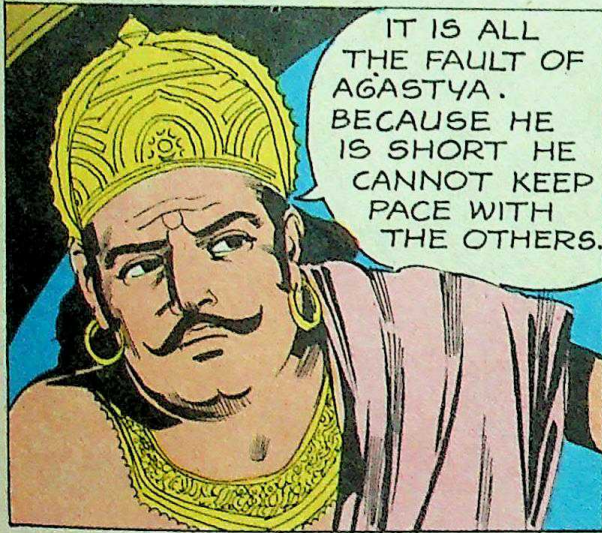


AT THAT MOMENT NAHUSHA WAS ON HIS WAY TO SHACHI'S PALACE.

LAZY FELLOWS!
HOW SLOW
THEY ARE!



IT IS ALL
THE FAULT OF
AGASTYA.
BECAUSE HE
IS SHORT HE
CANNOT KEEP
PACE WITH
THE OTHERS.



I SHALL
GOAD HIM ON.

*SARPA!
SARPA!



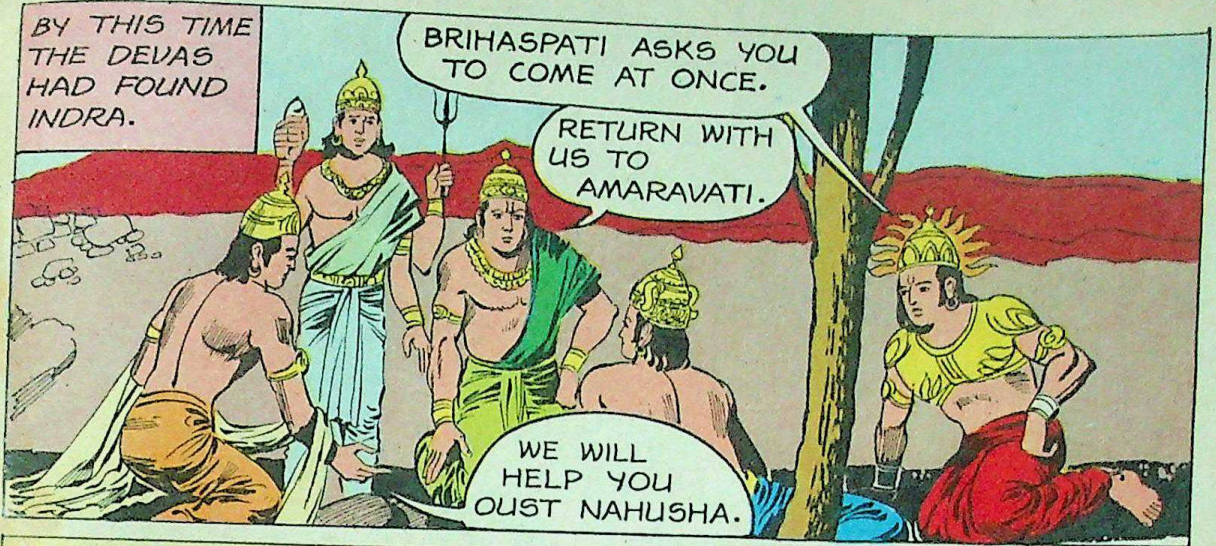
WHEN NAHUSHA KICKED HIM, AGASTYA BECAME ANGRY.

HOW DARE YOU!
SARPO BHAVA**
MY CURSE WILL
TURN YOU INTO
A SNAKE.



* MOVE ON. ALSO SNAKE.

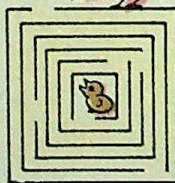
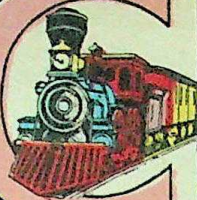
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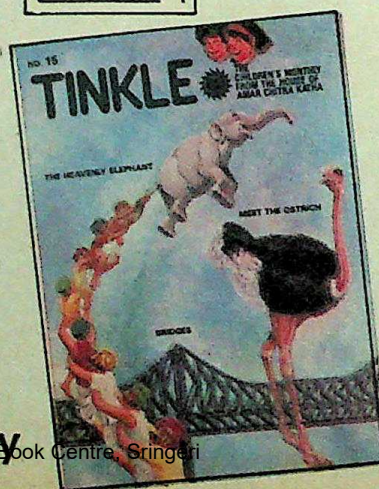


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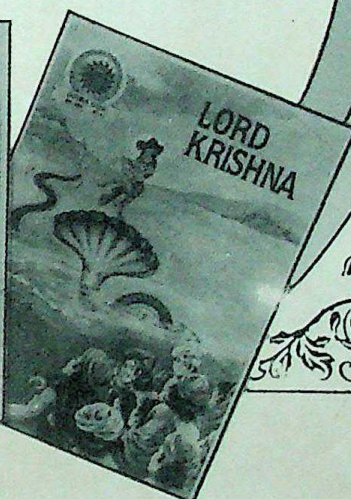
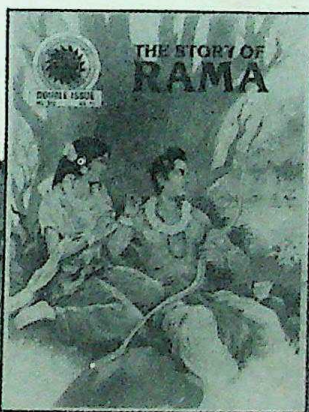
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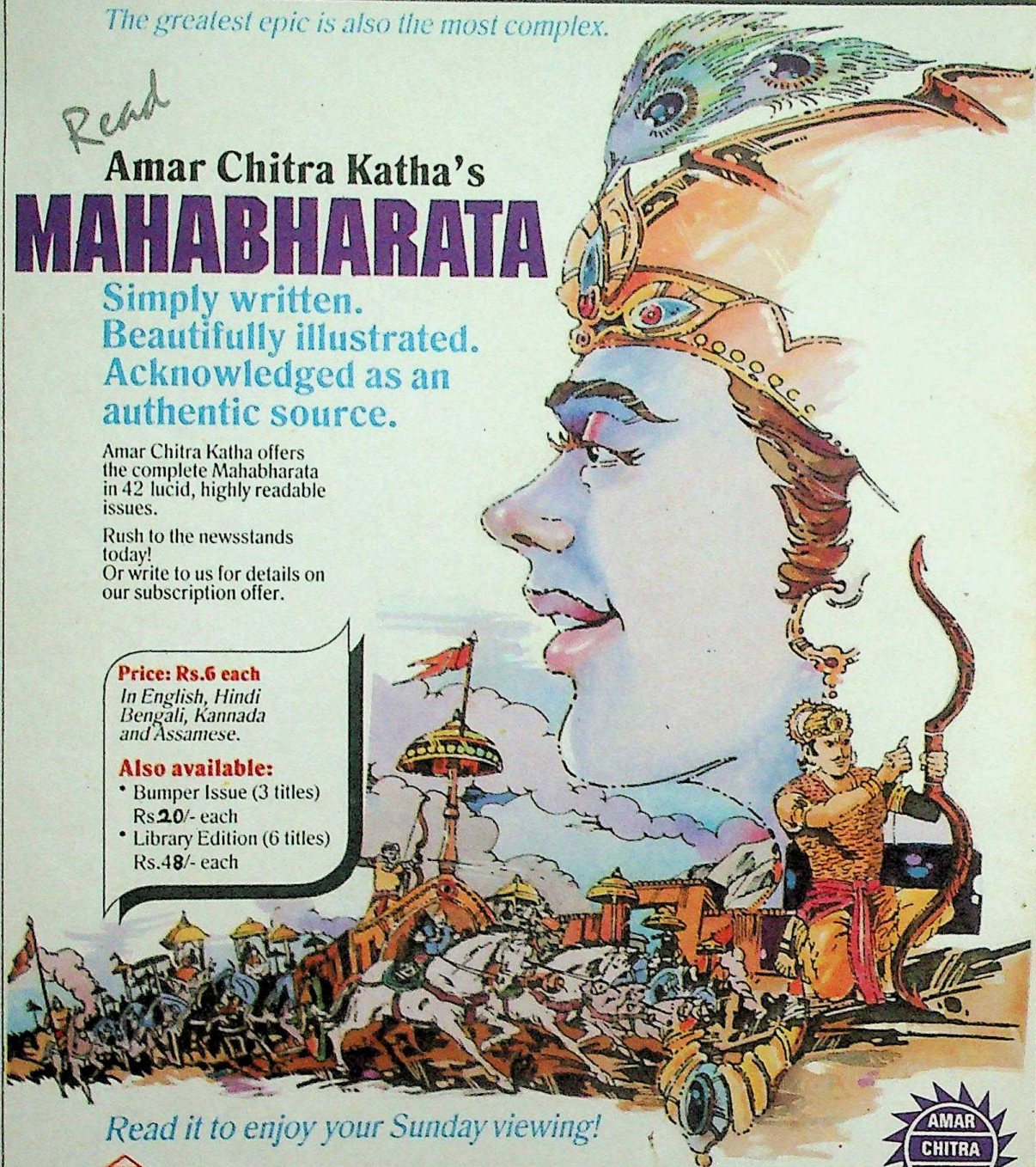
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